

SICC MEETING MINUTES

Truman Building, Room 500

May 14, 2004

Members Present

Leslie Elpers
Joan Harter
Darin Pries
Sherry Hailey

Margaret Franklin
Sue Allen
Lisa Robbins
Gretchen Schmitz

Melodie Friedebach
Valerie Lane
Elizabeth Spaugh
Sherl Taylor

Members Not Present

Paula Nickelson
Anne Deaton

Vicki Walker
Pam Byars

Kathy Fuger

DESE Staff Present

Dale Carlson
Joyce Jackman

Mary Corey
Bill Connelly

Debby Parsons
Angie Nickell

To review copies of handouts mentioned in the minutes below, go to the following website:

<http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/FirstSteps/SICCMtgdates.htm> and click on "Handouts" for the meeting you are interested in.

Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions - Elizabeth Spaugh called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Introductions were made. Stacy Vecellio, Administrative Assistant, Division of Special Education was introduced and will be taking minutes for the SICC.

Approval of SICC Minutes – Debby Parsons' name was listed as a member of the SICC instead of being listed with the DESE Staff Present. On page 2 in the sentence starting with "Leslie Elpers will lead a group of SICC members..." need to add "and other stakeholders."

Leslie Elpers made a motion to approve the minutes with these corrections. Susan Allen seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Change to the Agenda: Under new business, the second bullet will be a longer conversation that will include information about NECTAC.

State Agency Reports

DESE's "priority task list" for upcoming year – Melodie Friedebach received OSEP's response to the Annual Performance Report (APR) that the Division sent in several months ago. Debby will be reviewing and will be presenting information at the next SICC meeting. This should fit in with the division's priorities but may adjust which are the highest priority. Melodie would like to know what role the SICC would like to play in these activities (actively involved, offer suggestions, and/or have DESE handle.

1. Interagency Agreements – would like to strengthen Child Find (DOH involvement). Drafts ready by July 1. Valeri Lane asked if the new SPOE RFP had more definitive guidelines around the service coordination practices and oversight (required of independent service coordinators but not DMH service coordinators). The interagency agreements need to include this component so that all service coordinators are performing the same. Valeri also wanted to know what the SICC would like to see/recommend for these interagency agreements. Margaret Franklin indicated that from a DOH perspective, they would like to see a draft of the interagency agreement. Melodie indicated that DESE will begin with the current interagency

agreements and then make changes as needed. Sherry Hailey suggested that the interagency agreements be sent electronically to the SICC for their review and then comments/suggestions). Need to determine fiscal responsibility.

2. No longer an option.
3. Standards of practice in early intervention - (contained in the current RFP for the SPOE bids, incentive piece for the SPOE). Two committees have been formed that will be working on quality standards of practice and cost containment (meeting late June). Letters were sent out asking for nominations to serve on these committees. Would like to have some SICC members serve on committees. Not sure how often the groups will meet.
 - Standards of practice – Try to define the quality standards of practice in early intervention that can be reflected in IFSPs (needs to be completed by Fall). After the June meeting, a draft will be sent to other national groups for their review and suggestions.
 - Cost containment – Continuous improvement group will work closely with NECTAC (they are providing technical assistance to Missouri). Are services being delivered as the law requires in a family centered way? Are there really very many “bad” referrals). Probably will be able to do a lot of work via emails and conference calls (hope to have done by the end of the calendar year with possibly minor work going on past that). Possible commitment of two days 3-4 times over the next year.
4. Parent survey – The Division recently sent out a parent survey. Have received quite a few completed surveys at this time. The Division will present information at the next SICC mtg.
5. Appropriate referrals – Need additional data analysis (what SPOEs are spending on an evaluation versus direct services). Any specific questions should be sent to Pam Williams at Pam.Williams@dese.mo.gov. May need to do additional surveys of SPOEs to gather needed information. Can data be sorted by evaluations done within 45 days and those done annually? Need to review this data and present at the Sept SICC mtg. Need to work with PAT and early Head Start programs to assist them when working with families on what can be done if the child does not qualify for a referral. Some referrals are coming from doctors and hospitals. Could a brochure (magnetic) be created that explains a fifty percent delay to assist them in making appropriate referrals? Do not want referrals to not be made when they are needed just need to try and limit the inappropriate referrals.
6. Monitoring system – The Division is working with a national monitoring center. They will be providing technical assistance for Part B and C (meeting August 12-13). DESE will report back to the SICC. A letter will be sent to the SICC co-chairs for two people to serve on the committee (meet twice a year then just once a year). The committee will represent a variety of stakeholders (parents, SICC, SPOEs, etc). Identify major key areas to be monitored instead of many areas.
7. New RFP – Will monitor to see if the new changes are happening. Does the SICC have certain data they would like to see (cost, IFSP, etc.)? Unsure if CFO can pull specific data.
8. Training needs to be done once the new SPOEs are assigned.
9. Changes to data system will not be complete until October (giving time to field test system). Possible survey to SPOEs to see if data needs are being met. It was suggested that Vince Forcier with the CFO do a presentation for the SICC at their July meeting. Will need a discussion of the process changes to go along with the demonstration.
10. Debby Parsons is looking at all training pieces. Possible subcommittee to review training issues (is training having making a difference).
11. New RFP (role of the SPOEs) – There will be many new roles for the SPOE directors. Need to determine what training and supports are available for SPOEs in this new role?
12. Provider system – There is a lack of providers (providing services in natural environments in rural areas). NPA is now available to gather data for reasons. Phase 1 SPOEs will assist the Division with recruitment for new providers.
13. Already discussed.
14. Melodie wants a philosophy document for First Steps (short 3-page document to distribute). If someone finds old vision or belief statements, please forward to Melodie. Could discuss the Virginia document at the next SICC meeting if the previous statement can be found for comparison. The Virginia document is posted on the web under handouts for the March meeting.

Valeri would still like to have an update of the status of the priorities list at each meeting. Could be in the form of discussion or a handout stating where DESE is on each item.

FY 04 Budget Update/Supplemental Request (handout) – Dale Carlson indicated that insurance lobby stopped the family cost participation/insurance legislation. Joyce Jackman indicated that DESE can not require families to use their private insurance for early intervention services. Joyce indicated that the Compliance Section will be sending out some information regarding this. Sherry Hailey thought that there could be a strong grass roots lobby if enough time was given to contact legislative representatives. Dale felt that this was an important piece to assist with the funding of this program. The big dollars are in OT, PT, Speech, and ongoing services. Melodie indicated that OSEP is okay with the legislation and DESE may need to review the draft legislation again and reintroduce next year. Stakeholders and the SICC need to be involved in this process. The SICC needs to determine how serious they are with this legislation and what their plan of action should be. DESE is very limited on what they can do. This is the time to start planning. DESE could pre-file the legislation in December. The SICC should discuss at the July meeting any changes they would like to recommend to the language. How would families feel about family cost participation? Will families' insurance rates increase? The legislation was written so as not to impact caps or deductibles. Do we need this legislation to keep the program in place? Each year that DESE continues to ask the legislature for more money, they will ask about the need to continue the program. Sherry Hailey suggested that this question be included in the responsibilities of the Cost Containment committee.

Valeri wanted to know if the information that Dale presented could be presented again at the July meeting using the 2% actual numbers not estimates.

By a show of hands, the SICC indicated that they felt that the First Steps program should continue. The SICC was asked whether or not they felt that the First Steps program should continue as a federal program (receiving federal dollars) with all of the federal compliance regulations. If the federal regulations were not in place, a program could be designed in such a way as to provide services within the amounts of funding received. Services would no longer have to be based on IFSP team decisions. If there is an expansion of the eligibility criteria at the federal level it will significantly impact the program. Valeri felt that without the federal regulations, a concern she would have would be that the program would be designed around the needs of the state's budget and not the needs of the families.

Lisa Robbins indicated that she would be concerned with having DESE as the "God" over everything. And that even though the federal regulations may or may not be liked, that they at least give some oversight to the program. There would be some advantages as well as disadvantages to giving up the federal funding.

Sherry Hailey felt that the program is not being run the way that the Redesign Team had intended. Melodie wanted to know if it is because the training has not been strong enough or are there problems with the SC philosophy and/or monitoring. Dale felt that many of the issues have been addressed in the SPOE bid and that more oversight has been included. By a show of hands, the SICC indicated that they were in favor of continuing the First Steps program with the federal funding/regulations. Melodie Friedebach and Sheryl Taylor declined to vote.

The SICC indicated they would like to have DESE pursue the concept of allocating First Steps funds by SPOE. DESE will have to have a plan ready by July if they decide to go that way. A draft plan with the funds broken out by SPOE was handed out. No other alternatives were suggested. The SICC will receive reports at future meetings listing the monthly monitoring of this program.

DMH cost update – Richard Strecker (not able to attend) put on agenda for July

Contract Updates

SPOE Contracts – Joyce indicated that there are only two contracts out, St Louis and northwest areas. Review process is in its final stages and awards should be made in a week or so. Hope to have a July 1 implementation date. DESE will be sending out an email announcing the awards.

First Steps Consultants – Hope to have consultants on board by July 1 or shortly thereafter.

SICC Updates

ICC Nominations – Recommendations have been made to the Governor’s office (filling two parent positions and reappointing Leslie Elpers). DESE will review the membership and determine which terms end in July and will recommend reappointments as needed to the Governor’s office.

LICC Reports - LICC reports were presented to the Council. The LICC regional reports are posted on DESE’s webpage at <http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/FirstSteps/LICCregionpg.html>.

First Steps Systems Reports

MC+ pre-authorizations for assistive technology flow through Medicaid. SPOE allocations and money issues were discussed by Dale Carlson earlier in this meeting, as well as at yesterday’s SPOE directors’ meeting. Vince Forcier (CFO) demonstrated the new web based software at the SPOE meeting. Who will be responsible for inputting the additional information required by the new system? There was also discussion regarding training issues and data integrity. Valeri Lane suggested that those in attendance with questions should send them to Debby Parsons.

Training (rescheduled from the March SICC meeting) –Angie Nickell indicated that June 30, 2004, was the deadline for provider training. Providers that have been in the First Steps system the longest are to get priority for this training. There is another training scheduled for December 31, 2004. As of April 30, 2004, providers will be required to have training before entering the system. Providers will be grayed out on the matrix and will not be able to get new authorizations if they do not complete their training requirements. Providers will be able to continue with current authorizations but once the current authorization ends, they will not be able to extend for that child.

There are still fifty service coordinators that need to take the training. There will be a training scheduled in June and then two more between July and the end of December. After that time, the trainings will occur as needed to handle new service coordinators. Of the 320 providers enrolled in the on-line training since December only five have not passed the assessment. DESE will be updating the Q&A to reflect questions asked from the orientation module. Questions should be sent to the webreplies@dese.mo.gov.

CISE will be scheduling other module trainings and a schedule will be listed on their web calendar at <http://mu-cise-web1.coe.missouri.edu/web-cal/>. On-line registration will be available in July. People who enroll after July 1 must complete the training in six months. All of the trainings are only one day. There is a minimum of 30 people to hold the training. July and August training dates will be posted soon. DESE hopes to have 35–42 trainings scheduled from July through December. If someone does not have a documented certificate of completion, they will have to retake the training.

In order to keep from having different philosophies among the trainers, DESE has done a train the trainer and will follow-up with them. The trainers received more information in the form of trainer notes.

Debby Parsons discussed credentialing. For those with the educational background and qualifications and if they take and pass the modules, they will be listed on the matrix as credentiald. What needs to be done to stay current on the system? The CSPD committee could review the recredentialing issue. Those people are:

Sherry Hailey	Leslie Elpers	Mary Jane Wallen	Libby Sanders
Joan Harter	Pam Byars	Terri Glassner	Gretchen Swyhart
Anne Marie Wells	Elizabeth Spaugh	Diana Patten	Karen Kacobi
Stacey Ismail	Valeri Lane	Debbie Hamler	Sarah Parker

Some providers are threatening to pull out of the First Steps system because they do not feel that they need to take the trainings. They were allowed to enroll without taking the trainings. Training is a belief on the First Steps system, so they will not be allowed to stay in the system without taking the trainings.

Implementors are to do services outside of the actual therapist. Parents need to be educated to realize that they have a part to do and that the therapist is not to do the work, but to help the parent by showing them how and what to do. The parent should work with their child outside of the time a therapist is there. The philosophy needs to be sent out so that parents, physicians, service coordinators, and providers have the same document reflecting the same philosophy.

Old Business

Mileage Issue - Leslie Elpers indicated that this issue is really a desire to find a creative way to get services to under served areas. Provider recruitment in rural areas is very difficult. Other solutions suggested were: look at alternatives of what to do with the under served areas; increase the interest for potential First Steps providers in rural areas; and, retain current First Steps providers in under served areas. Other points and additional information was provided in a handout from Leslie. Contact Leslie to see if she has her handout electronically and if so, would she be able to forward it to us to be posted on the web under the handouts.

Valeri Lane will contact Medicaid and ask about additional payments to include driving time. Melodie will contact NECTAC for additional information about the payment structure. It was suggested that the Continuous Improvement Committee review Leslie's handout and look for possible solutions. Joan Harter suggested the possibility of checking with other states to determine how they handle similar problems. NECTAC would be the contact to find answers for how to deal with Medicaid differentials and how to deal with providing services to children in rural areas. This needs to go on the agenda for the next meeting. Melodie will take it back and go over with compliance. Could possibly send out to other organizations prior to next meeting. Valeri will write a letter to Medicaid.

Agenda items for next meeting:

- OSEP's response to APR and verification visit
- Parent surveys responses
- CFO Software demo
- FS beliefs and philosophy (Virginia document)
- Status of Priorities List
- Legislative advocacy
- Work of Leslie
- DMH Cost Update
- Budget items

Susan Allen made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Lisa Robbins seconded the motion. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.